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### PRESS RELEASE

# Officials Provide Guidance for Visitors at South Boston Beaches

DCR asks the public to refrain from visiting area beaches if crowds are forming, particularly during high visitation days and times, like weekends

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Department of Conservation & Recreation

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**BOSTON** — With the region experiencing elevated temperatures, local, state, and federal officials are providing guidance for visitors at South Boston Beaches, including Carson Beach and M Street Beach, ahead of the upcoming Memorial Day Weekend. Additionally, starting on Monday, May 25, 2020, beach users are able to engage in transitory and non-transitory/non-contact activities, including swimming and sunbathing, but must continue to adhere to social distancing and other Department of Public Health (DPH) guidelines.

“South Boston beaches are part of a network of natural resources that provide residents with critical access to the outdoors,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides**. “However, it is vital that while enjoying time outdoors we must all continue to be diligent during the COVID-19 public health emergency, and following the Commonwealth’s health and safety guidelines for beach visitors will help keep you, your loved ones, and others around you safe.”

“As the weather continues to get nicer, it will be tempting to let our guard down and relax the good practices of social distancing and wearing a face covering that so many people have been taking seriously,” **said Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh**. “I’m asking everyone to keep up these important precautions this Memorial Day weekend and beyond when visiting our beaches, or any place for that matter, because we cannot afford any setbacks, and we want to continue doing everything we can to keep people safe from COVID-19.”

Furthermore, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) asks the public to refrain from visiting area beaches if crowds are forming, particularly during high visitation days and times, like weekends. While visiting beaches, users should also expect limited amenities that would normally be made available this time of year, including comfort stations, visitor centers, parking availability, and trash receptacles.

“DCR beaches are among the most popular destinations within the state parks system, and while they remain open and available for the public to use, it is incredibly important that we all practice social distancing, avoid crowds, and wear facial masks or coverings when social distancing cannot be achieved,” **said Department of Conservation and**

**Recreation Commissioner Jim Montgomery.** “Furthermore, we ask that all visitors be respectful of local parking rules, posted signage, and other policies to ensure a fun, safe experience.”

“Following our successful efforts to clean up Boston Harbor, our beaches in South Boston have become enormously popular with the general public over the last decade,” **said Congressman Stephen Lynch (D-Mass).** “However, in order to safely proceed with the gradual reopening of our economy, it remains important that people follow the guidelines from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) when they visit these popular South Boston beaches. We must remain diligent and be respectful of each other’s personal space. We need to continue to protect each other, otherwise we will risk a resurgence, wider spread of the disease and more deaths. Massachusetts residents have put their faith in their elected officials and expert health officials to make the right decisions to protect their health and safety, and I commend Governor Baker and Mayor Walsh for their swift and decisive actions throughout this pandemic. Now as we begin to reopen public spaces, we must put our trust in each other as friends and neighbors to adhere to the guidelines, and I hope everyone is able to enjoy the good weather and the beaches in a safe, respectful manner.”

On Monday, May 18, 2020, the Baker-Polito Administration [issued](#) [\(/doc/beaches-guidance-for-managers-5-18-20/download\)](/doc/beaches-guidance-for-managers-5-18-20/download) guidance for both beach managers and visitors. This guidance includes:

- Parking lots, people entering the beach, or other factors should be managed, if necessary, to limit beach capacity to accommodate adequate social distancing based on an assessment by the beach manager;
- Beach visitors are required to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet or more at all times and visitors should maintain at least 12 ft minimum distance between towelings/beach blanket areas; and,
- Organized ball games should not be allowed activities, including, but not limited to, volleyball, Kan Jam, spikeball, football, soccer, Kadima, and bocce.

“We know residents are eager to head to beaches beginning this weekend as the weather warms up. But we cannot stress enough how important it is to remember we’re not back

to normal yet,” **said State Senator Nick Collins (D-Boston)**. “The bottom line is that if you are heading to the beaches and parks, it is not business as usual. So it is imperative that everyone be aware of and follow DCR’s guidelines so that everyone who wants to can safely enjoy being outdoors while mitigating unnecessary exposure during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“As our state beaches and parks remain open to the public, it is crucial that visitors follow the advice and guidance of public health professionals and the Department of Conservation and Recreation,” **said State Representative David Biele (D-Boston)**. “In addition to following the rules of the road and local parking requirements, this will allow all visitors to enjoy our beaches safely.”

When visiting the state parks system and other public places, DCR also offers general guidance for visitors to follow:

- If a park is crowded, please consider leaving the area and either visiting a different location or returning at a later date or time (typically state parks are less busy during the week and/or early in the morning);
- Follow posted rules, such as “carry in, carry out” trash policies and posted parking restrictions;
- Stay within solitary or small groups, and avoid gatherings of ten or more people;
- Practice social distancing of at least six feet between individuals;
- Wear a facial mask or covering in public;
- Participate in only non-contact recreational activities;
- Practice healthy personal hygiene, such as handwashing for at least 20 seconds; and,
- Stay home if ill, over 70, and/or part of a vulnerable population.

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### Department of Conservation & Recreation

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